

Dennis P. Collins Post Office

Congressman Sires has introduced legislation to designate the United States Postal Service building located at 570 Broadway in Bayonne, New Jersey as the “Dennis P. Collins Post Office.” Dennis P. Collins has served his state and country in a variety of positions. He is a veteran of World War II and served in the U.S. Army for three years, including time in the China-Burma-India theatre of operations. In 1962, he was elected to his first of three terms to the Bayonne Municipal Council, two of which he served as Council President. In 1974, he was elected to serve as the Mayor of the City of Bayonne where he served for the next 16 years. In 1990, he retired as Mayor but remains active in public life.

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www.house.gov/sires
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CONGRESSMAN Albio Sires



Dear Neighbor,

As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue, more and more of our brave men and women are returning home after tours of duty. These servicemen and women are continuing a long tradition of veterans who have kept our nation safe and secure for generations and I strongly believe that we as a nation owe it to them to ensure that they are taken care of after their years of sacrifice on our behalf.

In June 2007, the House of Representatives passed the Fiscal Year 2008 Military Construction and Veterans’ Affairs Appropriations bill. This spending bill appropriates \$87.7 billion for all veterans’ programs, a ten percent increase over current levels and is very important to the over 545,000 veterans living in New Jersey. This is the single largest increase in funding for veterans health care in the VA’s history and will add over 1,000 new claims processors to reduce the backlog of the hundreds of thousands of benefit claims. This bill sends a clear message to America’s veterans, servicemen and women, and their families: our nation is grateful for their service and their sacrifice.

Congress is committed to providing veterans with the health care and benefits we promised them, including the ability of hospitals to hire more qualified doctors and nurses to improve service and decrease wait times for doctor appointments. More funding will also be provided for prosthetics research and to help veterans suffering from traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Everything possible must be done to ensure that veterans in the 13th Congressional District and around the country have access to the important care and services they were promised. Please know that my office is always available should you have any needs or concerns. I am always here to help.

Sincerely,

Albio Sires

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Official Business

This mailing was prepared, published
and mailed at taxpayer expense.

M.C.
PRESORT STD

Health Care *for Veterans:*

With the number of servicemen and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, ensuring appropriate access to health care remains a top priority. Particularly important are the mental health services available to veterans. I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 2689, which would establish a program to provide readjustment and mental health services to veterans who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. One of the most important aspects of this bill is that it provides for vet to vet counseling, since it is vital for veterans who are returning with post traumatic stress disorder to be able to speak with someone who really understands what they are experiencing.

I am also a cosponsor of H.R. 2219, the Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline Act, which would award a grant to a private, nonprofit entity to establish and operate a national toll-free suicide prevention telephone hotline. This hotline would be targeted to and staffed by veterans.

Another crucial bill recently introduced is H.R. 3051, the Heroes at Home Act, which would improve the diagnosis and treatment of traumatic brain injury in members and former members of the Armed Forces and review and expand telehealth and telemental health programs of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. This bill would also establish a program to train and certify family caregivers of veterans and members of the Armed Forces with traumatic brain injury.



Congressman Sires meets with New Jersey veterans to discuss these important peices of legislation

Education *for Veterans:*

I am a cosponsor of H.R. 2702, the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2007. This legislation would entitle educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill to individuals who serve on active duty in the Armed Forces and Reserves on or after September 11, 2001. Qualifying veterans must have served at least two years of active duty and would include members of the Guard and Reserves with a total of two years of active duty. The bill would provide veterans with funding for tuition, books, and a monthly stipend. This benefit could also be used up to 15 years after discharge.

It has recently come to light that many Reservists who are currently enrolled at universities around the country were not being reimbursed for tuition or were given failing grades when they faced deployment in the middle of the academic term. As a result, legislation recently introduced in the House, known as H.R. 2901, the Veterans Education Tuition Support Act, would require colleges and universities to refund servicemembers' tuition and fees for unearned credits during the semester or quarter when they are activated for duty and allow them to return to school after activation. The bill also readjusts the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to treat student loans similar to other forms of debt and apply the six percent interest rate cap.

Retiree Benefits *for Veterans:*

It is vital that we better address the needs of veterans who are of retirement age and in the Guard and Reserves. I recently became a cosponsor of H.R. 690, which would reduce the minimum age to receive military retired pay for non-regular service from age 60 to 55.

As you may know, the receipt of both disability benefits and retired pay, commonly known as concurrent receipt, continues to be a problem for many veterans. That is why I am a cosponsor of H.R. 333, a bill which would permit veterans with a service-connected disability of less than fifty percent to claim both retired pay and disability compensation. Provisions requiring a phase in between January 1, 2004 and December 31, 2013 of concurrent receipt would also be eliminated. This legislation would also provide a special reduction rule for concurrent receipt in the case of disability retirees with less than 20 years of creditable service.